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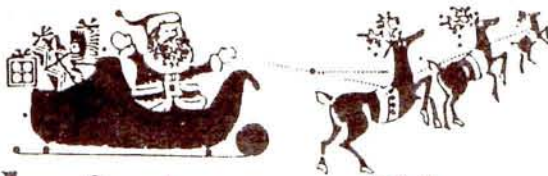
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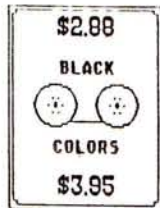
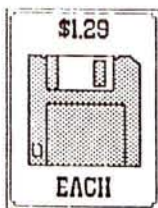
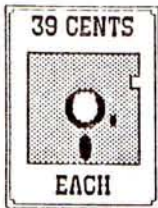
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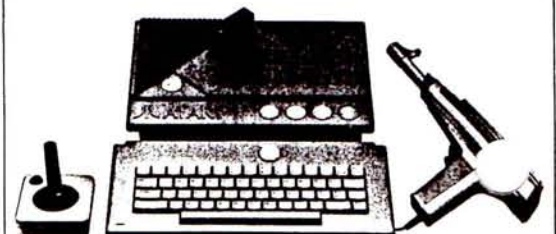
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One year membership is \$20 per household. This entitles you to purchase from a growing library of public domain files and receive the Journal which keeps you current on events in MACE and the Atari community. If you wish to join, attend a meeting or use the handy Membership Application found in the back of the Journal.

Disk Submissions

Disk submissions may be made in person at a meeting or sent to P.O. Box 2785 Southfield, MI 48037 to the attention of either 16 or 8 bit librarian.

Journal Submissions

Artwork and articles are always in demand in the MACE Journal. Please upload any articles to a MACE Network BBS. Artwork and articles can also be sent in hardcopy to the attention of the Journal Editor at P.O. Box 2785 Southfield, MI 48037. Deadline for submissions is the first of each month. MACE does not assume responsibility for return or safety of artwork, photographs or manuscripts.

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DECEMBER 1987
VOLUME 8 No. 11

MACE JOURNAL

The computer magazine for the progressive Atari user

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From Your President
by Don Neff

The cold weather is here, and the holidays are approaching quickly. I knew that if I waited long enough, I wouldn't have to take the storm windows down this summer! The change of seasons here in Michigan signals the end of summer activities and the beginning of indoor fun.

For many of us, this means sitting down in front of a warm, glowing computer. Notice, I didn't say **FRIENDLY** computer. There are times for all of us when our computer seems to be more of an adversary than a friend.

These are the times when you should think of your local user groups and their vast resource of helpful information -- their memberships. We are especially fortunate in southeast Michigan because we have several Atari-oriented user groups

to provide assistance.

Some of these fine groups are: WAUG, MAGIC, GLASS, GAG, CHAOS, and of course, MACE. The primary reason for the existence of MACE is to provide a means for all of us to share our Atari knowledge with each other and have fun learning together.

Getting help with your Atari problems is easy -- just ask questions at the monthly general meeting. Someone in the audience probably has a solution for your problem and will gladly share it with you if you ask the right questions.

Think of our MACE meetings as "the place with the solution," and bring your problems to the meetings.

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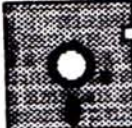
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Michigan Atari Computer Enthusiasts

General Meeting: 10/20/87

The October general membership meeting of the Michigan Atari Computer Enthusiasts was called to order at 7:40 p.m. by President Don Neff. Don immediately introduced Jim "Father Atari" Steinbrecher of Sector One, who demonstrated a software package he is developing for the XE.

Known as "Easy Scan," this package consists of a pair of fiber-optic cables attached on one end to the head of a standard printer, and on the other, to a cartridge that plugs into an XE or XL with at least 128K of memory. Jim noted the system stores one byte of information for every pixel it "sees," therefore requiring the extended memory available only in these machines. He also noted, if there were enough interest, he would consider making the system available for owners of the Atari 800.

Jim paged through many pictures "lifted" from real photographs as they rolled through the printer, and showed how the operator can later edit the color and intensity of the resulting data. He then proceeded to scan a photograph of Neil Harris of Atari.

The data file is then placed on the disk in a "byte-for-byte" format requiring 492 sectors, but can be compressed down to 62 sectors for permanent storage. This system, containing the cartridge scanner, software and documentation, will be made available to the public in approximately 10 days, and will retail at \$69.95.

Ed Hanson, chairman of the MACE ST Sig, demonstrated Goldrunner, a space-ship shoot-em-up game by Michtron. This game makes excellent use of the ST's graphics capabilities with extremely smooth and rapid vertical scrolling.

Ed also reminded the members that the Sig meets regularly on the first Tuesday of each month in one of the meeting rooms above the Parks & Recreation area of the Southfield Civic Center.

Don announced member Bernie Sherman contributed 140+ disks-worth of public domain software to the ST Library, and Paul Wheeler has been quite busy categorizing and copying them. In recognition of his extensive contribution, Bernie will receive a free one year renewal of his membership.

Don reminded the members there is a suggestion box for their benefit, and it has not been getting much use in the past. He specifically polled the members for

suggestions. Several people stated they would like to return to the informal Question & Answer session; others mentioned specific topics they would like to see discussed in future meetings.

After intermission, the ST New User Forum met for discussion while Don led the 8-bit New User Forum in further discussion about what topics they would like to see presented in the future. The meeting adjourned at 10:00pm. Next meeting will be on Tuesday, November 17.

*Michael Olin,
MACE Rec. Sec'y 10/21/87*

TRICKING THE INTEGER FUNCTION

By D.F.NEFF

You probably know the ATARI Basic Integer Function (INT) yields only the next LOWER integer for a decimal number. Here is a little trick to make INT yield the next HIGHER integer instead.

When INT works with negative decimal numbers, it follows the very same rules it uses with positive decimal numbers. However, the negative sign changes the outcome of the process. For instance,

$$\text{INT}(+2.5) = +2$$

because 2 is the next LOWER whole number ($2 < 2.5$). But,

$$\text{INT}(-2.5) = -3$$

because -3 is the next LOWER whole number ($-3 < -2.5$).

Continued on next page

Position Open

Needed: Dedicated BBS user looking to expand his/her horizons and become SysOp of a fine 8bit board.

Requirements: Experience with 8bit Atari systems and modems, and time to help fellow computer enthusiasts with problems using the board. Must live on the eastside.

Be all that you can be. Join the proud, the few -- the Sysops. Contact your neighborhood MACE officer.

We can use this to trick INT into giving us the next HIGHER integer instead. This is done by applying NEGATIVE terms to the example above to get:

$$(INT((+2.5) * (-1))) * (-1) = +3.$$

This might be more easily understood if it is written this way:

$$ABS(INT(2.5 * (-1))) = +3.$$

Both of these equations are essentially the same and each will give the next HIGHER integer of a positive decimal number. The following program allows you to demonstrate this trick for yourself.

```
10 REM . INT Function Trick
20 REM . By D.F.Neff
30 REM . MACE Journal, 1987
40 PRINT CHR{125}:REM CLEAR SCREEN
50 DIM A{6}:TRAP 80:REM ERROR TRAP
60 POSITION 1,3:REM TOP OF SCREEN
70 PRINT "WHAT DECIMAL NUMBER SHOULD I
USE ";:INPUT A:GOTO 90:REM GET A NUMBER
FROM THE HUMAN
80 TRAP 40000:A=2.5:REM DEFAULT TO
EXAMPLE IN TEXT
90 LO=INT(A):REM LOWER INT (NORMAL)
100 HI=ABS(INT(A*(-1))):REM HIGHER
INT(TRICK)
110 POSITION 2,8:REM MIDDLE OF SCREEN
120 PRINT "The HIGHER Integer is ";HI:PRINT
130 PRINT "The original number is ";A:PRINT
140 PRINT "The LOWER integer is ";LO
150 END
```



Things did not always go smoothly in the early days of the development of the Laser Printer

A few small Miracles

Editor's Note: This article appeared in the September, 1987 issue of Current Notes. Mark Brown was the author.

Welcome back to Atari's Small Miracles, the column of short programs that you, yes YOU, can type in and complete in your lifetime! Hopefully this month's programs will teach you a little, occupy some of your time, and otherwise fill up space in your dull, dreary lives.

There is no real theme this month, just an answer to frequent reader requests. "Frequent" means two or more people have asked for it. So, without further introduction, here we go!

Barriers

Some people have requested programs that are fun, like the graphics demos, but that you actually participate in, like some of the other programs. This means games, and they don't want to say it outright because they know that they are difficult programs to work with, requiring ingenuity, patience, and a lot of time and frustration in the programming. So, I yelled at myself for even thinking about asking myself to write one, so down at my computer and wrote BARRIERS.

The rules are simple: you are the moving ball; you try to get the diamonds that are standing still, 18 of them; you can alter the course of the ball by pressing the "/" key, which will put a barrier of that shape in front of the ball, altering its course accordingly; you try to do so with as few barriers as possible.

That's it! The final score is a ratio of barriers to diamonds caught. If your score is greater than three, you need lots of practice. Between two and three you should get no more than once or twice when you first play; between one and two should be a consistently achievable score; if you get less than one (a theoretically possible score) you're doing incredibly well. Enjoy it!

DATAENTR

Somebody recently accused me of going back on my word; the very first column of Atari's Small

Miracles contained a phrase that (in effect) said I would never throw eye-straining hex data lising your way that would drive you nuts. I lied.

So, the least I could do would be to give you a little help in entering those programs. So, here I present DATAENTR, a program that saves you a little typing by automatically putting in teh line numbers and the DATA statements for you, letting you just type the data continuously. Type in and RUN the program, telling it the beginning line number, increment and final line number of the data.

Thereafter, you can simply type in the data (either hex or decimal), pressing space or comma to put in a comma, Return to enter the line. The program will not let you press any other keys, banning the bane of all mass typists, the clear screen key. You can edit the line if you press the back space key, but that's it! You can quit any time just by hitting Break and saving the whole program, reRUNing it when you load it up again.

TFSVLD

The cryptic name of the program above stands for "Tiny Font SaVe & LoaD."

A few issues back, I provided a font editor that let you edit the characters of the Atari internal character set, making your alphabet Greek, Russian, a series of spaceships, or whatever. The program was rather powerful, but because it had to fit in less than 10 lines, the ability to load and save the fonts was left out.

Well, the following lines of code added to TINYFONT will add the appropriate commands to load and save your masterpiece fonts to disk. Pressing the control plus a letter of the alphabet will save the font under that letter (actually, TINYFONT.nox, where the last character, the x, is the letter you type in). This lets you save up to 26 fonts on a disk.

To re-load your font, just press the same letter, but without the control key. It's a somewhat crude human interface, but it adds very few lines to the program (only four) and it maintains the integrity of the original program, both good practices to follow when expanding a program.

WANTED

In search of a Lynkers 2400/1200/300 baud modem.

Leave a message with price wanted to Don on MACE weST -- (313) 582-0657.

So, here is both the original TINYFONT and its expansion, TFSVLD!

BARRIERS

```
10 CLOSE #6: OPEN #6,12,0, "S":POKE 752,
1:POKE 710,2:FOR Y=1 TO 22:POSITION 1, Y:?
CHR$(160):POSITION 38,23-Y
```

```
20 ? CHR$(160):NEXT Y:FOR X=1 TO
37:POSITION 38-X,1:? CHR$(160):POSITION
X,22:? CHR$(160):NEXT X:FOR Y=3 TO 20
```

```
30 POSITION INT(33*RND(0)+4), Y:?
CHR$(96):NEXT Y:X=2:Y=X:DX=1:DY=0:C=0:U=0:
FOR A=1 TO 256 STEP 0:LOCATE X,Y,Z
```

```
40 POSITION X,Y:? CHR$(20):IF PEEK
(764)<>255 THEN POKE 764,255:IF Z=32 THEN
Z=6:U=U+1:POSITION 1,23:? "USED:":U;
```

```
50 IF Z=6 THEN A=DX:DX=-DY:DY=-A
```

```
60 IF Z=160 THEN DX=-DX:DY=-DY
```

```
70 IF Z=96 THEN C=C+1:POSITION 10,23:?
"CAUGHT:":C;" ";Z=32
```

```
80 POSITION X,Y:? CHR$(Z)::
X=X+DX:Y=Y+DY:IF C<18 THEN NEXT A
```

```
90 POSITION 21,23:? ":SCORE:":DIM
N$(3):N$=STR$(U/C):? N$:FOR A=1 TO 2 STEP
0:NEXT A
```

DATAENTR

```
0 GRAPHICS 0:? "STARTING LINE:":INPUT B:?
```



```
:INCREMENT BY:::INPUT I:? "LAST LINE  
NUMBER:":INPUT E
```

```
1 OPEN #1,4,0,"K":FOR L=B TO E STEP 1:  
GRAPHICS 0:POKE 842,12:? :? :? :? :? L;"  
DATA ";
```

```
2 POKE 702,64:POKE 694,0:GET #1,A:IF(A>=48  
AND A<=57) OR (A>=65 AND A<=70) THEN ?  
CHR$(A);
```

```
3 IF A=32 OR A=44 THEN ? ", ";
```

```
4 IF A=126 THEN ? CHR$(126);
```

```
5 IF A=155 THEN ? :? :? "POKE 842,12:N EXT  
L":POSITION 2,0:POKE 842,13:STOP 6 GOTO 2
```

TINYFONT

```
10 GRAPHICS 0:POKE 752,1:? "SETUP...":DIM  
A$(2048):Z=INT(ADR(A$)/1024)*1024:Z=Z+1024*  
(Z<ADR(A$)):FOR A=0 TO 1023
```

```
20 POKE Z+A,PEEK (A+256*PEEK(756)):NEXT  
A:POKE 756,Z/256:POKE 82,13:? CHR$(125);"  
TINYFONT":? " _____";
```

```
30 ? :? :? "<ARROWS>CHOOSE":? " <+*-=>  
MOVES":? " <SPACE> MARKS":POSITION  
15,17:? "EDIT - '":POKE 82,2
```

```
40 S=PEEK(88)+256*PEEK(89):FOR B=0 TO  
3:FOR A=0 TO 31:POKE S+764+40*B+A,  
B*32+A:NEXT A:NEXT B:OPEN #1,4,0,"K"
```

```
50 X=1:Y=1:POKE S+703,C:FOR B=1 TO  
256:D=S+255+40*Y+X:E=PEEK(D):POKE  
D,E+128:GET #1,B:POKE D,E
```

```
60 IF B<32 AND B>27 THEN C=C-(B=30)+  
(B=31)-32*(B=28)+32*(B=29):C=C+128*(C<0)-12  
8*(C>128):GOSUB 90:GOTO 50
```

```
70 IF B=32 THEN POKE Z+C*8+Y-1,PEEK  
(Z+C*8+Y-1)+((2^(8-X))*(E<>0)):POKE  
D,3*(E=0):NEXT B
```

```
80 X=X-(B=43)+(B=42):Y=Y-(B=45)+  
(B=61):X=X-8*(X=9)+8*(X=0):Y=Y-8*(Y=9)+8*(Y=  
0):NEXT B
```

```
90 FOR B=0 TO 7:POSITION 16,B+7:A=PEEK  
(Z+8*C+B):D=127:FOR E=1 TO 8:?  
CHR$(32+3*(A>D));A=A-(D+1)*(A>D)
```

```
100 D=INT(D/2):NEXT E:NEXT B:RETURN
```

TFSVLD

```
5 DIM FN$(15):FN$="D1:TINYFONT.NO#"
```

```
35 POSITION 9,6:? " <A-Z> / <^A-^Z>  
LOAD/SAVE"
```

```
73 IF B<27 AND B>0 THEN  
FN$(15)=CHR$(B+64):OPEN #2,8,0,FN$:FOR  
A=0 TO 1023:PUT #2, PEEK(Z+A):NEXT  
A:CLOSE #2
```

```
77 IF B>64 AND B<91 THEN FN$(15)=  
CHR$(B):OPEN #2,4,0,FN$:FOR A=0 TO  
1023:GET #2,B:POKE Z+A,B:N.A:CLOSE #2:  
GOSUB 90
```

8bit FILENAME EXTENSIONS

by D.F. NEFF

The last three letters of a file name in a disk directory are called the Filename Extension. The purpose of the Extension is to identify the type of file, so you will know what loading method to use.

If you've ever struggled with a hard-to-load file on a any disk, you know how important the extension is. If all files had extensions on their names, you'd know how to load them right the first time!

I've found most people don't put extensions on their filenames because they don't know what the different extensions stand for. This is a list of some the most common ATARI extensions and their meanings.

.ACT	Action
.AMS	ATARI Music System
.ASM	Assembler Source Code
.AWD	ATARI Writer Document
.AWP	ATARI Word Processor
.BAP	Basic A+
.BAS	SAVED Basic
.BIN	Binary Code
.BSM	BASM
.BXL	Basic XL
.C	C Language
.CHR	Character (Font) Data
.COM	Compiled File Obj. Code

.CMD	Command File Obj. Code
.DAT	Data File
.DOC	Document (Text)
.EXE	Executable Code
.FIN	Financial Data
.FNT	Font Data File
.FOR	Forth Language
.GRn	Graphic Screen in Mode n
.LGO	Logo
.LIB	Library File
.LPD	Letter Perfect Document
.LST	LISTed Basic
.KOA	Koala Picture Data
.M65	MAC65 Source Code
.MAC	MACRO or MAC65
.MBD	Music Box Data
.MIC	Microllustrator Data
.MPD	Micro Painter Data
.MSB	Microsoft Basic
.MUS	Music Composer Data
.OBJ	Object Code
.PAS	Pascal
.PIC	Picture Data
.SCR	Screen Data
.SRC	Source Code
.SYN	Synassembler Source Code
.SYS	System File
.TEM	Temporary Storage
.TST	Test Data
.TWD	Text Wizard Document
.TXT	Text (replaced by DOC)
.V	Pokey Player Music
.XBS	Extended Basic

Newsletter sig

By Gordon Totty

The following is reprinted from the June, 1987 issue of The CIA ROM, the newsletter of the Central Illinois Atari User Group. It was printed in the President's Report by Robert Handley.

"Many clubs, whether it be computer, photography, or other organizations, all have one thing in common -- similar problems with trying to please the membership. The other day, I came across this interesting article in Professional Photographers of California Images, which I thought I'd share with you this month.

17 ways to kill almost any organization

1. Don't attend meetings. But if you do, arrive late
2. Be sure to leave before the meeting is closed.
3. Never have anything to say at the meetings, wait until you get outside.
4. When at meetings, vote to do everything, then go home and do nothing.
5. The next day, find fault with the officers and members.
6. Take no part in the organization's affairs.
7. Be sure to sit in the back so you can talk things over with a friend.
8. Get all the organization will give you, but don't give the organization anything back in return.
9. Never ask anyone to join the organization.
10. At every opportunity, threaten to resign and try to get others to do the same.
11. Talk cooperation, but don't cooperate.
12. If asked to help, say you haven't the time.
13. Never read anything pertaining to the organization.
14. Never accept an office, as it is easier to

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criticize than to do things.

15. If appointed to a committee, never give any time or service to it.

16. If you receive a renewal notice, ignore it.

17. Don't do any more than you have to, and when other use their abilities to help the cause, howl because the organization is run by a clique."

Handley closed with a hope this list provided some food for thought. It sure gave me a lot to think about. I like to think of myself as a supportive MACE member, and most of the time I think I am.

Yet, I must admit I have been guilty of many of the items on this list at one time or another. How about you? Each of us needs to decide what we will do about this, and how we react could determine the future of MACE. So, who cares?

The June, 1987 newsletter of the ChicagoLand Atari Users' Group, CLAUG, included an article entitled Soft Touch, by Jack Morrison. This article was reprinted from the September, 1986 issue of Analog. (Does anyone remember what those initials stand for?) Soft Touch is a touch tablet tutorial to use with AtariArtist.

The reprint includes four short programs (BASIC) for sound, cursor control, and a menu demonstration. The original article also includes a program for reading and plotting packed picture data. My touch tablet has been gathering dust, and I think I'll fiddle with these programs and put it back to use.

Volume 3, issue 6 of the newsletter of the Atari Federation dated 13 July, 1987, included a column called A-T-A-R-I, Answers, Tips, and Relevant Information, by Paul Alhart. I like your acronym, Paul. Is it original or is anyone else using that combination of letters?

The reason for the military style date is this newsletter is sent to us from Vandenberg Air Force Base, California. This month's relevant information is instructions and a program to permit you to modify the default settings in AtariWriter

Plus. Alhart has, in fact, developed a method for having two sets of defaults of your own choosing. One when you first load and another any time you press TAB from the global menu.

This would be very helpful to anyone who has to submit articles to a Journal where the editor requests the disk to contain a unique set of defaults to match his printer. Like me.

The request is reasonable, but I am always losing the list of requested defaults. I haven't had time to type this in yet, but if you want it, I am sure Jim Kennedy will be willing to loan you the newsletter to copy.

Gosh, did I just trip on Rule 13 again? Tell you what, I'll give Jim a dozen or so copies of the article to make it easy on him and you, if you request it. That's the least I can do!

Oh, no! Is doing the least you can do another of the rules? Can I quit while I'm ahead, or does that make me a quitter? Good grief! Goodbye.



*I'M SERIOUS! With the new module,
My ST Literally does everything!*



NEWS, VIEWS, AND REVIEWS

By Paul R. Wheeler



NOTE: The views expressed in this column are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the official views of MACE and its other officers.

We have all heard many times the pitfalls of piracy and how it is not condoned by user groups, their officers and the Atari end users in general. True? Well, every coin has two sides and this month I would like to flip that coin and view the other side. About 5 years ago I wrote an article for the MACE journal, stating my reasons in condemning the then growing use of copy-protecting. Happily someone was listening because more and more Software manufacturers are discontinuing the practice. Sadly they discounted my advise on lowering the prices to a more reasonable level as a means of discouraging piracy. From my own personal observation however, I feel that piracy is not as prevalent today as it was 5 years ago, and the message must be getting thru, that if we want good software to continue, piracy must go. All types of piracy must go, not only by the end-users but also by the manufacturers. Case in point, when I spent over \$150 for dBMAN by VeraSoft, upon opening the package, along with the registration card I discovered they wanted \$25 for support, and \$20-25 for upgrades. I sent in the card along with the \$25 for technical support (6 calls of up to 5 minutes each or one year which ever comes first), I didn't bother with the upgrades as I just purchased the package, right? Wrong, within 5 days I received a letter acknowledging the \$25 for support and a notice that I could upgrade the program for \$40 if it had a VeraSoft label or \$49.95 with an Atari label, of course mine was the later. If you haven't kept track that brings the total cost to over \$225 or \$75 extra over the



original price. I don't know about you but in my book this is definitely is a form of piracy of the end users money. Compare VeraSoft policy to that of Publishing Partner, who upon receipt of my registration card, immediately sent me two upgraded disk with no further action required on my part. Who do you think will get my future business? And what about Easy-Draw by MIGRAPH, their \$79.95 package was less than two months old when I was notified that I could get the up-graded version for \$49.95 by sending a check and the original disk. That my friends adds up to a whopping 66% increase of the purchased price and is another case of 'manufacturer piracy'. I point to these two cases as examples because of personal involvement, the letter I wrote to VeraSoft three months ago didn't even warrant a reply from them. Not all manufacturers pursue this method of ripping off the end users with their upgrades, enhanced version, etc., most offer upgrades at nominal cost (plus S&H), MichTron for example are \$5 for a minor revision and for major changes a charge of 15-20% of the original price. I would like to get response from members, PCers in general and manufacturers, be it pro or con, so I can do a possible follow-up on your views. While we are talking about the policies of manufacturers, a couple more items directly addressed to them. Registration or warranty cards should be on business reply cards, I sure cost could be absorbed the in the

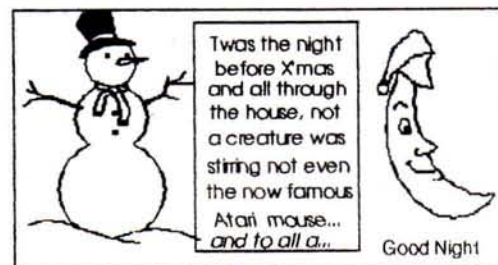
selling price, especially when you are asking for an in detail response from the purchaser. And why cards? I don't like to advertise to the general public my purchases, my system, etc., have you ever considered providing return envelopes? And your prices...\$19.95, \$24.95, \$49.95, \$99.99, \$699.95 and so on, doesn't anyone charge \$5, \$20, \$100, \$700 anymore? Give us a break. And speaking about breaks, I don't think a charge of \$40-\$50 for a game that will probably be gathering dust in a couple of months anyway, is a good inducement to sales, and getting back to my 5 year old article, a lower price might discourage piracy and at the same time increase sales, the end results would be more money in your coffers. Companies like Batteries Included who came out with quality products at reasonable prices, as well as many other fine manufacturers too numerous to mention by name, are to be commended for their efforts and we the end users should bear all this in mind when making our purchases.

It looks like this month you got a lot more of my views and less of the news and reviews but it was good for me, how about you?

I would like to close this month's column to wish everyone Seasons Greetings. There are lots of fine products both for the 8-bit and 16-bit machines and I hope that you get the one that headed your wish list when you open up your gifts.

I am sure that I am joined by the other officers in thanking for your continued support of MACE and wishing you the best.

prw



DO YOU NEED A DATA BASE?

By T. P. Sturza

The Cub Scout Pack or Girl Scout Troop needs a list of its members, by Den or Patrol or other group name. The Men's or Women's Club would like to have mailing labels for their monthly mailings. Then someone finds out you own a personal computer, (hopefully an ATARI) and suggests you help out. Your next step is probably to call a friend who convinced you to join a user group and ask for help.

Let's assume I'm the friend you called. First, I would have to find out exactly what you've been asked to do; how many members are in the group; and if you own a printer. Will they want a master list or just mailing labels? How often will the list need to be updated? From your answers to these and other questions, I would probably make two suggestions:

1) If your group has a small number of members, a word processing program may be the best choice to create and maintain your list(s). The addition, deletion or alphabetizing of information can be easily accomplished.

2) If your group is large, a data base program should be considered. Initially, it may take longer to set up and enter your information, but future changes should be easier and less time consuming. Also, if you think

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you'll need to print the information in more than one format, you will find a data base program was designed to handle such a task.

A data base program will help you create a UNIQUE RECORD LAYOUT (or format) allowing you to enter information (or data) into the computer in an organized or systematic fashion. This layout, once created, is then saved to a floppy or hard disk for future use.

For example, your screen layout might look something like this:

ENTER INFORMATION FOR CUB SCOUT PACK 870

NAME: _____
ADDRESS: _____
CITY: _____ STATE: _____ ZIP: _____
BIRTHDATE: ____/____/____
TELEPHONE NUMBER: (____) ____-____
DATE JOINED: ____/____/____
DEN NO.: ____ RANK: _____

Once you have defined the information you wish to enter and created the input layout, it is time to ENTER your data. It is here you key in the names, addresses and phone numbers, etc.

When you have finished keying in all of the data to complete one record, the data base program stores that record on your disk drive. The records stored by the data base program are stored in files; each file containing multiple records, each using the same record layout or format.

"Sounds great so far!" you say, "But what if people join or leave the organization after I've created my data base file; and how do I print mailing labels one time and an alphabetical list of all members the next time?" Well, there are additional functions available in most data base programs helping you easily use or change your data.

Such functions are SORTING the information on one or more data fields. For example, you might want a list of all boys in the Cub Scout Pack in den number order, with each boy's name in

alphabetical order. Or you might be asked to provide a list of boys in birth date order. The SORT function would provide you with the means to get your information in the desired order.

Create a PRINT FORMAT. Once you've entered your information it's time to do something with it. The most common output from a data base program is printed media. A good data base program will allow you to create any printed format your heart desires, not just pre-described formats. Your printout might contain each Cub Scout's name, address, phone number and age. Or you might need mailing labels containing only names and addresses. Once you have described how you want the output to be printed, you can save a copy of the print format (or layout) on a floppy disk (or hard disk) for future use. This saves you the trouble of having to describe your print format each time you need to print something.

PRINT A REPORT or MAILING LABELS. It is here you decide what file you wish to print and which print format you would like to use. Turn the

printer on, make sure the paper or mailing labels are lined up correctly, and your computer will do the rest. A word of warning! I frequently find tractor-feed mailing labels need assistance. You will probably want to stay nearby when printing mailing labels; jams or mis-alignments may occur.

Create BACKUP copies of your information! Never assume your only copy of very important data will always be readable by your computer. If the information was important enough for you to enter into your computer, it's important enough to make a 2nd or a 3rd copy as a backup. You could always use DOS or TOS to make a copy, but most data base programs either make a backup copy as they are used or have an utility to make one.

I hope this article gives you a better idea of what a data base program can do. If you think you may have a need for a data base program or desire additional information, I recommend that you visit one of the advertisers in this Journal, attend a ST SIG meeting (1st Tuesday of each month) or attend a New User (ST or 8-bit) session at the monthly General Meeting (3rd Tuesday).

A Tale of two Home Finance Programs: The Money Manager & Family Finance By Gordon Totty

The first article I ever wrote for the MACE Journal was about a program from Atari entitled "Family finances." It was published in the June, 1985 Journal. I know this because I just looked it up to compare what I said about it to what I am about to say about The Money Manager, published by Timeworks, Inc. Both the Atari and Timeworks programs were copyrighted in 1982. The author of the Money Manager is not identified in the manual.

Let's start with the good things to say. First, I had wanted for a long time to try out some Timeworks software. I was impressed with their advertising, packaging, and the various reviews I read about their stuff for the ST. It felt good to get the opportunity when I spotted this program in a local store.

Another very good thing to say is I remain impressed with all you get in the Family Finances program, which can be purchased for just about

the same price I paid for the Money Manager. Family Finances is still available at a number of local stores, too. In 1975, I was worried that it would soon no longer be available. Family Finances has served my simple needs very well for almost three years.

Well, I think I've said all the good things there are to say about the Money Manager. Are you getting the picture?

A negative review is no fun to write, and I write for fun. I wouldn't pan this product, in spite of how unbelievable simplistic it is, except for the fact I think some sort of "truth in advertising" standard has been blatantly violated, to the point where I am thinking of seeking a refund. (Unheard of! The package is open. I booted the disk. It is not "defective" in the retailer's sense of the word.)

On the back of the package is a picture of four

screens, which I assumed were from the program. Three are, the fourth is not. The fourth one is one of the reasons I bought this package. It shows a black-bordered display of a bar chart. The background of the chart itself is white. So far, so good, because black and white are the only colors you get! But, on the box, the various bars are shown in color: two greens, two blues, two reds, an orange and yellow. The bars themselves are honest-looking bars. You know the kind, some call them rectangles. They have four straight sides and four 90 degree angles, or something like that. Never having excelled at geometry, I think I know a rectangle when I see one, but describing it correctly is another matter!

Compared to the box illustration, what you get from the program is a mess. Black on white, or white on black, you do get that much choice. But each budget "bar" in the bar chart is a column of uppercase B's. Each actual bar is a column of uppercase A's. Cute.

Timeworks doesn't know its market! I am an Atari computer user. Color, graphics, Pizazz! All lacking, promised by the box, but not within. At least not for the Atari purchaser. The front of the disk can be used for the Commodore 64. Maybe the Commodore bar charts are in color.

I used to be an accountant. An accountant would say "Who needs all the color and fluff? Bah, humbug! Sissy stuff! How useful is the program?" Not much at all. Far less useful than Family Finances, which had no bar chart feature.

The major telling difference is that with Family Finances, you can input and save a record of each expenditure. The program totals them and compares them to the budget you input. Not so with The Money Manager. You must save your receipts in separate envelopes for each category. At the end of the month, you are expected to add them all up and input just the total, category by category. You can then query this program to tell you, for example, what percentage rent was of the total expenses in any month, or what percentage rent was of the rent budget. Wow! I can do more than that with Syncalc, and so can you.

The Money Manager can interface with another Timeworks program, the Electronic Checkbook,

which sells for just as much as The Money Manager. I am not about to double my investment in this stuff, however, just to see if perhaps the two programs used together come closer to meeting the level of performance of Family Finances.

The Money Manager is expensive at any price above \$5.00. I have typed better programs into my computer from magazines. Timeworks ought to kill this one to protect its reputation... or have I been misled about that too?

Buy Family Finances. After using it regularly since September, 1984, the worst thing I can say about it is it's slow. Like me. Like my 8bit computer with any program written in BASIC.

You know, as I started this review, it had not occurred to me to ask for my money back. But now, by golly, I'm going for it. Wish me luck. Atari owners everywhere deserve more for \$15.99 plus tax.

Postscript: I got the refund with no hassle at all. I will continue to give some of my business to The Electronic Boutique.



It is always amusing
to watch the friendly "rivalry"
between users of competing brands
of computers...

TWO AND A HALF FROM MICHTRON

ST Software Review by Ed Hanson

Tuneup (Price: 49.95)

Anyone with a hard drive knows how fast a hard drive can be. But, have you noticed how much faster your hard drive was when you first got it or just after you reformat or zero your drive. Your hard drive was actually faster then.

Why? It all has to do with the way information is stored on a disk drive. Information is stored in 512-byte groups called sectors on the ST disk drives. Sectors also contain some error-checking information and a pointer to the next sector. When you first start putting information on a drive, a file's sectors lie one after the other. But, after a few files get deleted, added, and expanded, this will no longer be the case.

So, your computer and disk drive must search for the information, which, for a given file, could be all over the disk. This is why the disk drive runs a bit slower. Now we have a utility called TuneUp by MichTron. As the name implies the program performs a tuneup on your disk drives.

Using the program

Run the TuneUp program by double-clicking on the Icon or text. Looking through the menus, we find several very useful functions. These are Print Log window, Print disk contents, Disk Statistics, List contents, Check disk structure and two optimize functions. The Print Log window lists to the printer the functions you have performed using TuneUp. Print disk contents and list disk contents do exactly what you would expect.



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Either list the complete contents (folders and everything inside of them) to the screen or printer. Disk statistics tells you how much room is used and how much room is left. Statistics also tells you how fragmented the free space and files are. This can indicate how much of a speed increase tuning your drive will get you.

Also, a very handy Check Disk Structure function is provided. This function will repair most common (minor) errors. It has helped me several times. Now for the real power of the program, the optimizing functions.

Two optimizers are included with the program. The first is for read and write disks. This function will try to place your files in contiguous (sectors that are sequentially numbered) sectors at the beginning of a partition. This is faster for creating and saving new files. The greatest savings occur by forming contiguous files.

The second optimizer is for read-mainly disks. The optimizer places information at the end of a partition to increase reading speed. I did not believe this at first, but you can really tell the difference between the two optimizers. I have been optimizing drive C (my boot drive) for read-mainly, and it really does help.

A couple of interesting things the program can show you graphically the layout of your drive and where a file is on a disk.

I feel TuneUp is the most useful utility a person with a hard drive can have. The program increases drive speed and provides several excellent utilities. Most people would like the ability to see exactly what programs and files are where, and on a hard drive, that can be difficult. Michtron's TuneUp is an excellent buy for the money.

M-Cache (Price: 39.95)

M-Cache is a hard drive caching utility by MichTron. What is a caching program? Just think of a caching program as an automatic RAM disk. The one major advantage a caching program has over a Ram disk is everything written to the cache is automatically written to the hard drive.

So, if anything causes the computer to crash, your data should be safe. A caching program will load itself with the information you use the most (directories, etc.). Once you read a sector from the disk, it is then placed into the cache. After it is placed in the cache, the next time the sector is read, it will be read from the high-speed cache. You can do things faster than you could without a cache.

The MichTron M-Cache program does this very well. I have never experienced any problems at all either running or installing the program. The installation procedure is very simple and well documented. It took me about 5 minutes to install the M-Cache program on my hard drive. Installation M-Cache asks if you want to cache drives C:\ to P:\ by asking (Cache drive X:(Y,N)?). This question is asked for each drive from C:\ to P:\. After you answer each of these, M-Cache asks for the number of sectors to cache. This can be from 1 to 1024, but remember, each sector takes up 520 bytes.

After entering the number of sectors, M-Cache will configure itself to automatically set to your parameters. I also installed this in my auto folder to automatically load and run.

Usage

Not much to say here. M-Cache automatically caches every file loaded from the drives you

selected.

M-cache differs from some of the other caching programs by having you specify the amount of computer memory to dedicate to cache for all the drives you selected to cache when you installed the program.

Some of the other caching programs have you dedicate separate memory from each cached drive. I feel the MichTron method is superior. All in all, if you would like to speed up your computer system, I would highly recommend MichTron's M-Cache.

The Protector (Price: shareware)

People familiar with the telecommunications world have heard about "Trojan horse" programs. Well, anytime hard drives become popular with a computer, Trojan horses are bound to appear.

A Trojan horse is a program that sounds like a helpful program, but is really not. The descriptions given about the program are misleading. Actually, they are just a cover for some demented person's joke. This joke usually means erasing a person's hard drive. Maybe, going to the point of formatting your drive. Sounds sick, doesn't it?

Well, The Protector will hopefully stop this problem from occurring to you. The program is a desk accessory that allows you to selectively permit a program to write to a disk drive. If you do not allow writes to a drive, the program flashes the screen at you. This really gets anyones attention.

I use this program when I am trying out new public domain software. The program really does stop programs from writing to a disk. I have tried it with spreadsheets and word processors, etc. This program is a welcome addition to any software library.



Postscript

M.A.M. on the Move, by Bill & Pattie Rayl

Editor's note: A proposal to join the Michigan Atari Magazine appeared before the MACE membership at November's meeting.

In the October issue of the Michigan Atari Magazine, John Nagy stated MAM may be moving to Ann Arbor. He also mentioned we were its "prospective" new editors. Well, barring any major catastrophes of Biblical proportions, MAM is definitely on the move and the December issue will be published in Ann Arbor.

Now, for a little background. The Michigan Atari Magazine is currently published by the joint cooperation of seven Atari user groups in Michigan. These include GAG of Flint, TAG of Bay City/Saginaw, GRASS of Grand Rapids, CHAOS of Lansing and WAUG of Ann Arbor. MAM is the official newsletter of those participating groups, with all the information you would normally find in a newsletter, plus! John Nagy started the magazine over a year and a half ago, and has earned a name for himself and the magazine in the Atari Community.

John Nagy approached us and said MAM was beginning to take more time than he had available. This, along with a lack of people willing to help him in the Lansing area, prompted his search for someone willing to "take it over." We were interested and wanted to hear more.

During the Detroit Atari MAGIC Show, we met with John and discussed the idea in more detail, and it was at this meeting the move became a very good possibility.

Since that time, we have contacted officers of all groups currently in MAM and some who aren't, including MACE's officers, trying to learn what they like and dislike about the magazine and what they would like to see change or stay the same.

We believe the magazine has much to offer user groups with up to date information on what's happening in the Atari community, and what is happening at other groups in the state. New software reviews, interviews with the people

behind the good titles, and help with your computer, no matter your experience level. We will keep an even blend of 8bit and ST information because we know there is lots of life in all the Atari computers.

So far, the response has been very good, and we've hear some legitimate complaints about the current publication and some good ideas from these groups. One of the things we would like to do is keep this open communication going -- more on that later.

Those of you who are familiar with MAM already know what format the magazine currently has. We're going to change that. The magazine will be full-size (8-1/2 x 11) with a *glossy* cover! We will also be using a Hewlett Packard laser printer.

Now, you're all saying "what's it gonna cost?" right? MACE would receive MAM for 68 cents an issue. For that 68 cents, each member will receive a 36 page, 8-1/2 x 11, monthly magazine delivered to the general membership meeting. Or MACE could elect to have the magazine delivered directly to each member's door for 80 cents per issue. At 68 cents an issue, MACE members would be getting MAM at 66% off the \$2 cover price!

Non-participating groups and individuals can subscribe to MAM for \$18 a year per subscription.

On top of paying these low rates, member clubs (and individual members of each club) will also be able to have copy printed on our laser printer for only 60 cents per page (plus postage, where applicable). The going rate for laser printing is 75 cents to 2 dollars per page. Non-members of MAM may still get printing done, but for a higher price!

Another benefit we offer, thanks to UofM, is the Merit Network. Via Merit, many of the clubs around Michigan can call our bulletin board (The Treasure CheST (313)439-2816 3/12/2400 baud) for free. Member clubs can upload their submissions to us at no cost. The BBS will also be used as a forum for people to discuss or complain about the magazine, suggest changes, or just to leave a word of praise. We guarantee your responses will be heard and will make a difference.

Of course, the major benefit of participating in MAM is the ability to interact with the other Atari clubs around the state. The magazine is a place where the participating groups can pool their knowledge and resources. Through MAM, each group can give a helping hand to fellow Atarians around the state. MAM, by nature, promotes this interaction and cooperation between the user groups, and we feel that this is the best reason for a club to participate!

Each club that participates in MAM has different resources to draw upon and unique outlooks on the computing world. In our magazine, these various resources and outlooks come together in one convenient place. By joining MAM, you get some of the benefit of joining *each and every* club that participates in MAM!

User groups are designed to help their members get the most out of their computing. MAM is

designed to help you get the most out of your membership in a user group.

All Michigan Atari user groups are being approached with an offer to join MAM, with many favorable responses so far. If all goes well, MAM will have over 10 participating groups with a press run of 1500 issues per month!

John Nagy has, in our opinion, done an excellent job with the Michigan Atari Magazine. We know we can do as good, and we hope to do even better. John isn't going to disappear into the woodwork, though. You'll still be seeing his name on a number of articles.

So, as you can see, MAM is on the move -- in more ways than one!



The MACE officers
wish all MACE members
a VErY
Merry
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M.A.C.E. meetings are open to member families only. Membership dues are \$20 per year, which applies to all family members living at the same address. A special "Guest Membership" is available for \$2 per family and is good for one meeting only. Guest Members will receive one copy of the current M.A.C.E. Journal but will not be able to purchase diskettes from our libraries.

If a Guest Member decides to join M.A.C.E. during the meeting, M.A.C.E. will deduct \$2 from the \$20 membership fee, upon being shown a M.A.C.E. Journal with "Guest Member" stamped on it.

Also, any member of another computer user group (not just Atari groups) will be admitted to our general meeting at no charge. If these guests wish to have a copy of our Journal, they will have to pay the cover price.

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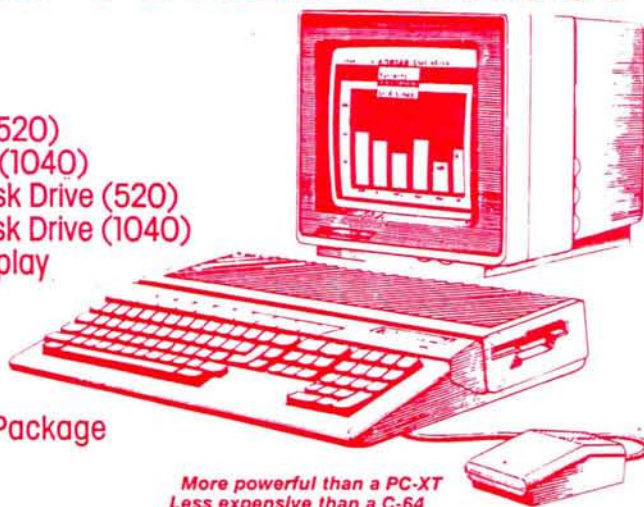
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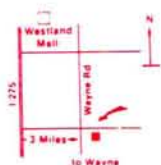
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